

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HIRE MORE HEROES ACT OF 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 4, 2015

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 22) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act:

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Chair, I thank Chairman SHUSTER and Ranking Member DEFAZIO for working with me on both of my amendments.

The amendment I offer would require the Department of Transportation to submit a report to the House Transportation Committee and the Senate Commerce Committee on research managed by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to develop a system to measure vertical track deflection caused by a moving railroad car.

Such a system should be able to identify a combination of factors that, individually, may not be able to cause a train derailment but that, together, could endanger safe train operations, such as deteriorated cross ties, fouled ballast, and other deficiencies in the structures that support rail tracks.

The amendment authorizes the Department of Transportation to develop a plan for using quantitative inspection criteria to identify poor track support systems if such an approach is supported by the FRA's research.

The amendment also authorizes the Department to develop a plan to install instruments to measure track deflection on its Automated Track Inspection Program geometry cars within 3 years of the date of enactment of this bill, if this approach is supported by the FRA's research.

I developed this amendment in very close consultation with the families of Rose Louese Mayr and Elizabeth Conway Nass, who were tragically killed in a coal train derailment that occurred in Ellicott City, Maryland, in my district, in 2012.

These families have worked tirelessly to understand the technical circumstances that led to the 2012 train derailment and to identify specific steps that can be taken to prevent future tragedies. I am deeply honored to have worked with them on this amendment.

According to the National Transportation Safety Board's (NTSB) report on the Ellicott City accident, "the point of derailment was a rail fracture several hundred feet" before a bridge. After extensive laboratory analysis, the NTSB concluded that the broken rail segment, "showed evidence of rolling contact fatigue, a gradual breakdown of the rail-head surface."

The Ellicott City accident is one of several recent accidents that have involved rail-head

wear and drawn attention to the ways in which the presence of multiple individual defects can eventually lead to a rail break.

While track conditions are addressed in current Federal Track Safety Standards, there are no quantitative inspection criteria. Consequently, these conditions are rarely cited as defects to be remediated.

I hope that we can build on the research foundation that my amendment requires and eventually develop rules that will address specific track conditions.

HIRE MORE HEROES ACT OF 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 3, 2015

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 22) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act:

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chair, it is a sad commentary on the state of this House that the highway bill we are considering is being called a victory, and that the mere act of bringing a bill to the floor is a major step forward.

As a nation with a D+ grade on infrastructure from the American Society for Civil Engineers, we need an ambitious plan to rebuild and modernize. We need to invest in transit, fix structurally-deficient bridges, connect people to jobs, and move goods across the country. We need to put people to work in every community bringing our transportation system into the 21st century. That's why I introduced a version of the President's GROW America Act that would have invested more in our infrastructure.

Instead, we are considering a very modest proposal. It's a six year bill at current funding levels adjusted for inflation, with only three years of funding. The pay-fors include bad and inefficient policies like hiring private debt collectors to harass taxpayers. It dramatically cuts the TIFIA loan program and fails to provide adequate funding for transit. And it needlessly erodes environmental and community review of projects.

This bill does have some positive provisions providing resources for major projects, continuing funding for bike-ped and Safe Routes to School, and strengthening Buy American requirements. I appreciate that my amendment to allow communities to protect consumers from predatory towing has been included in the bill. And I strongly support reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank to open up international markets for American goods.

But I am disappointed that this bill does not go farther to improve and transform our trans-

portation networks. As we begin conference negotiations with the Senate, we must significantly boost investments, eliminate problematic offsets, and restore meaningful project review.

ROTARY CLUB OF WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS CELEBRATES 100 YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. MAC THORNBERRY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 16, 2015

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Rotary Club of Wichita Falls, Texas, on its milestone of providing 100 years of service inside and outside of our community.

The Rotary Club of Wichita Falls consists of 90 dedicated men and women who make a difference on the local, national, and international level. The Club's motto is "Service Above Self," and this organization certainly abides by this statement with its many service projects and support for numerous organizations throughout the Wichita Falls area and beyond.

The wide variety of organizations supported by the Club includes the Boy Scouts, YMCA, Youth Leadership, and the Boys and Girls Club. In fact, the Boys and Girls Club has maintained a connection to the Rotary Club for an impressive 86 years and continues to flourish with its support. These programs provide needed growth and leadership opportunities for developing future leaders. The Club also plays a key role in a variety of adult programs, which includes the Adult Literacy Council, The Food Bank, American Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, and the Salvation Army, just to name a few.

Additionally, the Wichita Falls Rotary Club provides many services and support for Sheppard Air Force Base (AFB), a base that plays a key role in training and equipping U.S. Air Force personnel. A highly notable program is the Squadron Adoption Program with the goal to establish and maintain exemplary relations between the permanent party military stationed at Sheppard AFB and the proactive leadership of the communities throughout Wichita County. Units from both the 82nd Training Wing and the 80th Flying Training Wing participate in this program. Groups like the Rotary Club play an important role in ensuring our military receives the support and gratitude they deserve. The Rotary Club also helps remind us that our country remains strong because of the sacrifice made by our men and women in the military.

Another important program the Rotary Club has adopted is the flag project, which consists of Rotary members placing American flags around the City of Wichita Falls. With this project alone, the Club has managed to raise and donate approximately \$700,000 to local and worldwide Rotary projects. These services

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